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ABSTRACT

In this speech, the author proposes a 5-point program designed to increase the number of women in administration. The program calls for (1) the identification of potential women administrators who might be successful at their own institution or at another institution by a committee on the status of women at each campus; (2) the setting up of a regional cooperative rotating internship in administration by a group of neighboring institutions; (3) the identification of potential women nominees for the Academic Administration Internship Program in Washington; (4) the agreement of the cooperative institutions to suggest women candidates for administrative openings when such openings become known; and (5) the establishment by academic administrators, working through national professional associations, of a national talent bank of female administrative talent. (Author)

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TOOLING UP IN THE TALENT POOL:

A PROPOSAL FOR REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN

by

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A statement read at the Panel on "Women in Administration", American Council on Education, 55th Annual Meeting, October 6, 1972, Miami Beach, Florida

Since this panel comes at the end of the meeting of the American Council on Education, a meeting devoted entirely to the topic of women in higher education, it seems to me that the background has already been adequately covered and most of the important arguments and facts have already been brought into relief. Our effort at this stage should be to apply what we have learned to the topic of this panel--"Women in Administration."

We are past the stage of initial shock and name calling. We are past the stage of parading unproved or unprovable accusations. The cause of women's rights will now be aided most by a well thought out program of positive action. My own judgment is that the movement for women's rights in the academic world will be set back by further accusations by women's rights advocates of ill will on the part of male administrators or by accusations of positive downgrading of women, or by accusations of deliberate infringement of women's rights, etc. Accusations of willful,

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deliberate and malicious activity on the part of male administrators will do nothing except to irritate them and divert them from coming to grips with the problem.

The principal problem with women in administration and the principal fact regarding women in administration is that there aren't any women in administration--hardly any to speak of, that is. To remedy this, in addition to a positive attitude and general good will toward the problem, we need a program of action, which will, indeed, result in there being more women in administration. I pass over all theoretical arguments which might be advanced to the effect that women are less effective as administrators, that women do not like to work for other women, that men do not like to work for women, that women are too sympathetic or compassionate to be tough enough for administration. I pass over all these arguments because, frankly, I do not think they are true, nor do I believe there is any hope of proving them, except in an individual concrete case. And here I would be willing to admit that I have also known some men who were too sympathetic or too compassionate to be in administration, or who were not tough enough to survive as administrators.

Recognizing then that the basic problem with women in administration is that there aren't any women to speak of in administration, it seems to me that the most direct, concrete action we can take is to devise a program which will have as its end result an increase in the number of women in administration. This means that we must identify the normal route by which people arrive at positions in academic administration in the United States. I wish to propose a five point program which we can start to implement the minute we return home.

1. The first step is the identification of potential administrative talent. As an academic administrator returning to my home campus, my first effort would be to see to it that there is a committee on the status of women in my own institution. If this does not exist I would see that it is established and this in the reasonably near future. I would, however, take time to study the matter carefully and to see to it that the various groups are properly represented in its initial composition. It is far better to establish a committee of this type when the pressure is not on, than after a crisis has arisen. As an administrator, I would invite the members of the committee on the status of women at my institution to help me to identify potential women administrators who might be successful, either at my own institution or at another institution. I would ask that they try to identify these from the women currently employed at my institution or from among acquaintances at other institutions located in the same geographical area.

2. I would then work with fellow administrators of neighboring institutions to set up a cooperative rotating internship in administration. This is a recognition that one of the principal routes to an administrative position is the provision of some kind of administrative experience in an internship setting prior to selection for the position. I would work with my administrative colleagues to get them to agree that they will open up committee meetings, trustee meetings, budget committee meetings, rank and tenure meetings at their institutions, and that we agree among ourselves that those who are selected for the internship program in administration will be rotated through a variety of administrative experiences. I would naturally want to have a screening committee to select those most qualified for this internship experience. I would want to have the administrators meet with the interns periodically during the year, and develop a program that would be modeled somewhat after the

Academic Administration Internship Program (AAIP) sponsored by the American Council on Education.

3. Then, not satisfied completely with this regional type of internship program sponsored cooperatively by a group of neighboring institutions, I would also want to identify potential women nominees for the Academic Administration Internship Program and send their names to Charles Dobbins who adminsters this program at ACE headquarters in Washington.

4. As a fourth step I would also work with my fellow administrators to get them to agree to suggest women candidates for administrative openings when such openings become known, whether these openings are at my own, at a neighboring, or at some other institution. Naturally, this would be done when the qualifications of the intern fit the requirements of the position. We would mutually pledge ourselves to keep readily available a list of women who had completed the internship program, plus such other confidential information as we might care to assemble.

5. As a fifth step I would suggest that each of us as academic administrators work through the Association of American Colleges, the American Council on Education, the American Conference of Academic Deans and other organizations to establish a national talentbank of female administrative talent, so that inquiries addressed to these organizations at the national level would find a pool of applicants who are qualified for and interested in considering administrative positions.

I have deliberately by-passed all of the arguments about the acceptability of women in administration. It seems to me that the only way in which their acceptability will change is when administrators themselves change and this can be done only through the appointment of women to administrative positions. I have said nothing about preferential

employment of women administrators because frankly I question whether this is desirable. It seems to me that those who are best qualified will rise to the top, that the internship program provides a time of testing, not only by their internship supervisors and mentors, but also by the interns themselves in deciding whether they wish to pursue an administrative career.